

Ebola Facts for Schools

Ebola viruses are found in several African countries. Ebola was first discovered in 1976 near the Ebola River in what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Since then, outbreaks have appeared sporadically in Africa. Ebola is caused by infection with a virus of the family [*Filoviridae*](#), genus *Ebolavirus*. There are five identified Ebola virus species, four of which are known to cause disease in humans. Ebola, previously known as Ebola hemorrhagic fever, is a rare and deadly disease caused by infection with one of the Ebola virus strains.

Transmission

When an infection occurs in humans, the virus can spread in several ways to others. Ebola is spread through direct contact (through broken skin or mucous membranes in, for example, the eyes, nose, or mouth) with:

- Blood or body fluids (including but not limited to urine, saliva, sweat, feces, vomit, breast milk, and semen) of a person who is sick with Ebola
- Objects (like needles and syringes) that have been contaminated with the virus
- Ebola is not spread through the air or by water, or in general, by food. There is no evidence that mosquitoes or other insects can transmit Ebola virus.

Symptoms

- Fever (greater than 100.4°F)
- Severe headache
- Muscle pain
- Weakness
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Abdominal (stomach) pain
- Unexplained bleeding or bruising

Symptoms may appear anywhere from 2 to 21 days after exposure to Ebola, but the average is 8 to 10 days.

The Ebola virus can only be transmitted when the infected person is exhibiting symptoms. Recovery from Ebola depends on good supportive clinical care and the patient's immune response. People who recover from Ebola infection develop antibodies that last for at least 10 years.

Prevention

- Practice careful hygiene. Always wash your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid contact with blood and body fluids.
- Remain home from school for the duration of illnesses.
- Seek medical care immediately if exhibiting symptoms.

Resources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/index.html>

United States Department of Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, Readiness and Emergency Management of Schools

<http://rem.ed.gov/>

Virginia Department of Health, Division of Epidemiology,

Vdh_Epi_Comments@vdh.virginia.gov

Virginia Department of Health Ebola Fact Sheet

<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/news/pdf/Ebola%20FAQ.pdf>

References:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

United States Department of Education

Virginia Department of Health